

ASSESSMENT OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH WHITE SUPREMACY EXTREMIST  
ATTACKERS' MANIFESTOS INDICATE SHIFTS IN THE WHITE SUPREMACY  
IDEOLOGY

by  
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## **Abstract**

In the wake of a series of high-profile white supremacy extremist attacks, each following the attackers' wide dissemination of a manifesto detailing their motivations and ideological basis for an attack, understanding the ideologies that guide extremist violence is all the more important. This is particularly true when extremist ideologies may change. Little work has been done to understand the extent to which manifestos authored by high-profile white supremacy extremist attackers may indicate change or shifts in the white supremacy ideology. This study seeks to contribute to work on this subject by first hypothesizing—based on the existing literature relevant to ideologies, extremist communication, and the implications of extremists' radicalization and mobilization to violence—that while shifts in the core themes of the white supremacy ideology would likely not occur, manifestos will indicate shifts in secondary or tertiary themes of the ideology. Content analysis was performed on the manifestos of four high-profile white supremacy extremist attackers: Dylann Roof, Brenton Tarrant, John Earnest, and Patrick Crusius; and the ideological themes for each were compared between all four manifestos. The results of the study support both aspects of the hypothesis. Over the course of four high-profile white supremacy extremist attacks, where manifestos authored by each perpetrator were disseminated online just prior to the attack, some ideological themes shifted, either appearing or re-appearing in a later manifesto. Additionally, shifts did not occur uniformly, and appear to have been dependent on the nature of each attacker's specific ideology, as well as other contextual factors. This study contributes to the literature in three key ways. The first is by providing support to a relatively small body of literature on the nature of white supremacy extremist manifestos, and their implications

for the ideology they purvey. The second is by providing support to the existing literature on the nature of ideologies, extremist communication, and radicalization and mobilization to violence. The third is by serving as a baseline study, providing a foundation for future work to consider what causes shifts in the white supremacy ideology.

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## Introduction

The series of high-profile attacks carried out within the last decade by lone actor white supremacy extremists in the United States and abroad, from Norwegian attacker Anders Breivik, through El Paso, Texas attacker Patrick Crusius and Halle, Germany attacker Stephan Balliet have been widely publicized.<sup>1</sup> These extremists' widespread dissemination of manifestos online before their attacks has also been covered extensively in the media, and some studies have been conducted to assess the primary themes and implications of these manifestos from various perspectives, to include the field of linguistics.<sup>2,3</sup>

While some media reporting and research indicate that both a wave of inspiration between attackers and some variation in ideological themes between their respective manifestos exist, little has been done to gain a deeper understanding of the extent to which these inherently ideological, widely distributed, and apparently influential documents may indicate shifts in the nature and breadth of the ideology they represent. The potential implications of ideological shifts are critical for counterterrorism efforts, as

<sup>1</sup> "German Halle gunman admits far-right synagogue attack." BBC. October 11, 2019, Accessed June 5, 2020. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-50011898>; "Norway attack: at least 80 die in Utoya shooting, seven in Oslo bombing." Guardian. July 22, 2011. Accessed June 5, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/23/world/europe/23oslo.html>; Van Sant, Shannon. "Accused Shooter In New Zealand Mosque Attacks Charged With Terrorism." NPR. May 21, 2019, Accessed June 12, 2020. <https://www.npr.org/2019/05/21/725390449/accused-shooter-in-new-zealand-mosque-attacks-charged-with-terrorism>; Chris, Graham, "Patrick Crusius: El Paso shooting suspect fuels fear of increasing white supremacist threat." Telegraph. August 4, 2019. Accessed June 14, 2020. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/08/04/patrick-crusius-el-paso-shooting-suspect-fuels-fears-increasing/>; Hanna, Jason., Simon, Darran. "The suspect in Poway synagogue shooting used an assault rifle and had extra magazines, prosecutors said." CNN. April 30, 2019. Accessed June 15, 2020. <https://www.cnn.com/2019/04/30/us/california-synagogue-shooting-investigation/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> Leonard, Cecilia H., George D. Annas, James L. Knoll, and Terje Tørrissen. 2014. "The Case of Anders Behring Breivik - Language of a Lone Terrorist." *Behavioral Sciences & the Law* 32 (3): 408–22.

<sup>3</sup> Ware, Jacob. 2020. "Testament to Murder: The Violent Far-Right's Increasing Use of Terrorist Manifestos." International Centre for Counter-Terrorism. Accessed May 30, 2020. doi:10.2307/resrep23577.

shifts in ideological themes may increase the appeal of violent extremism to a larger audience, increasing the chances of mobilization to violence. Understanding the potential for such shifts and the breadth of ideological themes being purveyed online is crucial in identifying potentially novel themes that may serve as ideological bases for radicalization, and thwarting potential attackers before they mobilize to violence. This study seeks to determine the extent to which manifestos authored and disseminated by lone actor white supremacy extremist attackers might indicate shifts in the white supremacy ideology. It does so first by reviewing the literature on subjects most pertinent to this issue, particularly the nature of ideology<sup>4</sup>, communication, radicalization and mobilization, and the implications of violence. It then compares the changes in themes considered key to the white supremacy ideology across the manifestos of four high-profile white supremacy extremist attackers—Dylann Roof, Brenton Tarrant, John Earnest, and Patrick Crusius, deriving these themes from content analysis of each manifesto.

## **Literature Review**

### Nature of Ideology

While there is no shortage of work dedicated to understanding the nature of extremist ideologies, much of this work suggests they are the product of, and are dependent on, complex social interactions—including communication, and are vulnerable to change. There are significant similarities in both Donald Holbrook and John Horgan’s work, as well as Angela Tretheway, et al.’s conceptions of ideology. In their review of existing definitions of ideologies, Holbrook and Horgan describe ideologies as “systems

<sup>4</sup> A definition of the white supremacy ideology, to be used for the purposes of this study, will be addressed in the Hypothesis and Methods section.



of belief with collective properties and purpose.”<sup>5</sup> Holbrook and Horgan draw upon several sources for this definition, including political theorist, Michael Freeden. Freeden defines ideologies as constituting “imaginative maps [that are] collectively produced and collectively consumed in unpredictable ways.”<sup>6</sup> In their research on ideology and extremists’ strategic communication, from the perspective of Islamist extremism, Trethewey, et al. conceive of ideology as a “system of ideas about how things are or ought to be that circulates in the social discourse.”<sup>7</sup>

Much of the literature indicates the existence of an ideology is dependent on the social interactions of individuals with similar ideas and perceptions of the world. Holbrook draws on the thoughts of Michelle Dugas and Arie Kruglanski in describing the concept of ideology as an “inextricably social” one, “consisting of a shared reality adopted by members of a collectivity and spread via the formation of social bonds.”<sup>8,9</sup> Trethewey, et al. build on this framework by suggesting factors such as historical events, perceived political or religious conditions, and economic or social conditions may influence and shape individuals’ ideas and perceptions about the world, creating “shared meanings” that are understood by a collective.<sup>10</sup> According to John Jost, et al. and Craig McCarty, these ideas and perceptions may be reached via negative experiences, such as perceived injustices, and lead individuals toward alignment with a particular collective

<sup>5</sup> Holbrook, Donald, and John Horgan. 2019. “Terrorism and Ideology: Cracking the Nut.” *Perspectives on Terrorism* 13 (6): 2–15.

<sup>6</sup> Freeden, Michael. 2006. “Ideology and Political Theory.” *Journal of Political Ideologies* 11 (1): 3–22.

<sup>7</sup> Trethewey, A., Corman, S.R., & Goodall, H.L. 2009. “Out of their heads and into their conversation: Countering Extremist Ideology.” Report No. 0902, Consortium for Strategic Communication, Arizona State University.

<sup>8</sup> Dugas, Michelle, and Arie W. Kruglanski. 2014. “The Quest for Significance Model of Radicalization: Implications for the Management of Terrorist Detainees.” *Behavioral Sciences & the Law* 32 (3): 423–39.

<sup>9</sup> Holbrook and Horgan, 2019.

<sup>10</sup> Trethewey, et al., 2009.

with the same or similar ideas.<sup>11,12</sup> Holbrook argues the shared nature of ideologies allows them to “frame” and “[add] meaning” to several concepts, some of which are pertinent to terrorism (e.g., shared grievances, heritage, belonging, etc.).<sup>13</sup>

As ideologies are based on shared perceptions and ideas of the world, and corresponding social interactions, they are vulnerable to change from a variety of factors that may influence individuals’—and collectives’—ideas about the world, including the context in which both exist. According to Tretheway, et al., these include changes in the “local” and “cultural” contexts ideas reside within, as well as the perceptions of social, political, or religious conditions.<sup>14</sup> Factors such as persuasion and propaganda, as well as stories and narratives purveyed within and between collectives may also change ideologies.<sup>15</sup> In this way, ideologies are “ongoing and changeable,” and may be “made and remade in everyday conversations.”<sup>16</sup> John Wilson, J.M. Berger, and Holbrook, et al. also identify a variety of “modes of transmission” that contribute to the maintenance and fluidity of ideologies, including stories, speeches, writings, and most notably, manifestos.<sup>17,18,19</sup> Ideologies are thus fluid, are the product of—and contribute to—complex social interactions, and are subject to change over time.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Jost, John T., Julia Becker, Danny Osborne, and Vivienne Badaan. “Missing in (Collective) Action: Ideology, System Justification, and the Motivational Antecedents of Two Types of Protest Behavior.” *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 26, no. 2 (April 2017): 99–108.

<sup>12</sup> McGarty, Craig. 2014. “New Technologies, New Identities, and the Growth of Mass Opposition in the Arab Spring.” *Political Psychology* 35 (6): 725–40.

<sup>13</sup> Holbrook and Horgan, 2019.

<sup>14</sup> Trethewey, et al., 2009.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Berger, J. M. *Extremism*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2018.

<sup>18</sup> Holbrook and Horgan, 2019.

<sup>19</sup> Wilson, J. (1973) *Introduction to Social Movements*, (New York: Basic Books), pp. 91-92.

<sup>20</sup> Holbrook and Horgan, 2019.

## Nature of Communication and Implications

The literature on extremist communication is also well developed, though a more pertinent and recent subset of work focuses on the complex nature of communication, and its implications for extremist ideologies. Steven Corman's extensive work in the field of extremists' strategic communications, predominantly focused on Islamist extremists, suggests the process of communication between individuals is highly complex. Corman, et al.'s work advances on previous models of communication with the "Pragmatic Complexity Model."<sup>21</sup> Corman, et al. argue the meanings of messages transmitted from one individual to another may be influenced, or distorted, by a variety of factors beyond sender/recipient-specific faults, such as insufficient message formation, or accurate translation of the message. Many other factors may distort the message, including the recipient's autobiographical history, culture, language, and their "immediate personal needs."<sup>22</sup> A "double contingency" exists in communication, where the sender influences the recipient by sending a message, but factors including the recipient's "expectations, interpretations, and attributions" regarding the sender also shape the recipient's interpretation of the message.<sup>23</sup>

In other work, Corman and Kevin Dooley argue it is "impossible" to predict the effects a message will have as a number of variables, to include "[other] messages," "themes," "audience segments," "interpretations of messages," and "media channels" all influence the transfer of messages.<sup>24</sup> Referring to this complex system in which messages

<sup>21</sup> Corman, S.R., Tretheway, A., & Goodall, B. 2007. "A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Model for Communication in the Global War of Ideas: From Simplistic Influence to Pragmatic Complexity." Report No. 0701, Consortium for Strategic Communication, Arizona State University.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> Corman, S.R., Dooley, K.J. 2008. "Strategic Communication on a Rugged Landscape." Report No. 0801, Consortium for Strategic Communication, Arizona State University.

are transmitted as a “rugged landscape,” Corman and Dooley argue that as the number of these variables increase and interact with one another, the successful passage of a message is more difficult. The successful passage of a message therefore depends on the nature and number of these variables, as well as how they interact with one another.<sup>25</sup> In previous work, Corman, et al. describe the message sender and recipients’ role in this complex communication system as being “locked in a system of *simultaneous, mutual interdependence*.”<sup>26</sup>

Corman, et al. also argue that communication fundamentally functions to construct a “social reality” or “system.”<sup>27</sup> As a result, individuals within the system tend to interpret messages in ways that align with their view of “reality” by warping their translation of received messages.”<sup>28</sup> The above conditions suggest, as Corman does in referring to the work of Robert Jervis, that the effect of messages during communication are “often unpredictable” and may have “indirect” effects.<sup>29,30</sup> The overall system of communication is not entirely under the control of the communicators, while the behavior of the overall system in turn influences the communicators.<sup>31</sup> These findings directly align with more recent work by Cristina Archetti on extremist communication and online radicalization. Archetti argues the online “information space” is quite similar in its

<sup>25</sup> Corman, Dooley, 2008.

<sup>26</sup> Corman, et al., 2007.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> Jervis, Robert, *System Effects: Complexity In Political and Social Life*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997.

<sup>31</sup> Corman, et al., 2007.

complexity, and that audiences are selective in the information they choose to receive, and in their interpretation of it.<sup>32</sup>

A significant portion of the literature suggests narrative is an influential force in extremist communication.<sup>33,34,35</sup> More recent work by Corman and Archetti considers the importance of narratives in extremist communication, though Archetti more explicitly discusses the impact narratives have on extremists' communication and radicalization online.<sup>36,37</sup> Corman argues narratives—or stories told from the perspective of extremists—are based on a conflict (or deficiency) that requires resolution.<sup>38</sup> “Master narratives” may also be used by extremists, are based on “social, cultural, or religious stories that are widely known in a culture,” and may be employed in what Corman refers to as a process of ‘vertical integration.’<sup>39</sup> Here, extremists perceive of themselves as part of a master narrative they’ve come to know, and act to bring what they perceive as some form of resolution to the perceived conflict or problem.”<sup>40</sup>

Archetti likewise argues the role of narratives in extremist communications online is important as narratives are highly complex stories that are borne from the aforementioned interactions and relationships of many individuals that make up social networks. Archetti draws from the work of Margaret Somers and Gloria Gibson as well

<sup>32</sup> Archetti, Cristina. 2015. “Terrorism, Communication and New Media: Explaining Radicalization in the Digital Age.” *Perspectives on Terrorism* 9 (1): 49–59.

<sup>33</sup> Casebeer, W.D. and J.A. Russell (2005) “Storytelling and Terrorism: Towards a Comprehensive ‘Counter-Narrative Strategy,’” *Strategic Insights* 4(3).

<sup>34</sup> Quiggin, T. (2009) “Understanding al-Qaeda’s Ideology for Counter-Narrative Work,” *Perspectives on Terrorism* 3(2), 18-24.

<sup>35</sup> Halverson, Jeffry R., Goodall, H. L., Jr., and Goodall, H. L.. 2011. *Master Narratives of Islamist Extremism*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. Accessed June 14, 2020. ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>36</sup> Corman, Steven R. 2016. “The Narrative Rationality of Violent Extremism.” *Social Science Quarterly* 97 (1): 9–18.

<sup>37</sup> Archetti, 2015.

<sup>38</sup> Corman, 2016.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

as Harrison White, which argue narratives are the product of social interactions, or communication.<sup>41,42</sup> In order to exist, narratives require communication to be passed on, though may be considered from the individual level (i.e., “a person’s understanding of the world and one’s role in it”).<sup>43</sup> Individual narratives, per Archetti, are shaped by the network of relationships that an individual is both active in, and influenced by.<sup>44</sup> Drawing from the work of Craig Calhoun and Benedict Anderson, Archetti further suggests the online realm expands these relationships beyond those that are in-person to include “indirect relationships,” which facilitate the emergence of “imagined communities.”<sup>45,46,47</sup> Extremists, and others, may align themselves with large communities based on the primary concerns of the narrative(s) they are focused on, but have no actual in-person relationships with others in the community.<sup>48</sup> An extremist may therefore act entirely alone, but is not doing so in his or her mind.<sup>49</sup> As information is purveyed in the online realm, the media, and other sources, individuals may ingest the narratives of other extremists or terrorist organizations, possibly promoting mobilization to violence.<sup>50</sup> Terrorist organizations’ may therefore allow individuals to serve as actors in a collective narrative that is in alignment with their own, in a process similar to Corman’s process of

<sup>41</sup> Somers, M. R. and G. D. Gibson (1994) “Reclaiming the Epistemological “Other”: Narrative and the Social Constitution of Identity,” in C. Calhoun (Ed.) *Social Theory and the Politics of Identity* (Oxford: Blackwell), 37-99.

<sup>42</sup> White, Harrison C. *Identity and Control: How Social Formations Emerge*. 2nd ed., Completely rev. ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008.

<sup>43</sup> Archetti, 2015.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> Anderson, Benedict R. O’G. *Imagined Communities: Reflections On the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Rev. ed. London: Verso, 2006.

<sup>47</sup> Calhoun, Craig. 1991. “Indirect Relationships and Imagined Communities: Large-Scale Social Integration and the Transformation of Everyday Life,” *Social theory for a changing society*. Westview Press, 95.

<sup>48</sup> Archetti, 2015.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

vertical integration. Because an individual's relationships within a network (either direct, or more likely, indirect in the online realm) vary widely, radicalization depends on the specific nature of an individual's relationships.<sup>51</sup>

### Radicalization and Mobilization

Radicalization is well covered in the literature, and while it suggests radicalization is driven by several factors, certain characteristics of the radicalization process regarding ideology and communication are pertinent to this study. Randy Borum's work on radicalization into violent extremism draws from the social science disciplines, including social movement theory, and argues radicalization, or the "process of developing extremist ideologies and beliefs," is highly complex and influenced by multiple factors.<sup>52</sup> Borum also suggests the process of radicalization is separate from engagement in violence, arguing that the two are not always connected: many who adopt radical ideas and support justifications for violence do not engage in violence.<sup>53</sup>

Recent work on radicalization by Thomas Holt, et al.—largely from the field of criminology, and in alignment with past influential work of the kind<sup>54</sup>—suggests a nexus between radicalization online and willingness to engage in violence does exist via the formation of subcultures.<sup>55</sup> Holt argues that those with perspectives of the world that are not widely considered socially acceptable are typically ostracized from society, and driven to "underground enculturation online."<sup>56</sup> Drawing from past work on subcultures

<sup>51</sup> Archetti, 2015.

<sup>52</sup> Borum, Randy. 2011. "Radicalization into Violent Extremism I: A Review of Social Science Theories." *Journal of Strategic Security* 4 (4): 7–36.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> Wolfgang, Marvin E., and Franco Ferracuti. *The Subculture of Violence: Towards an Integrated Theory In Criminology*. London: Tavistock Publications, 1967.

<sup>55</sup> Holt, Thomas J., Joshua D. Freilich, and Steven M. Chermak. 2017. "Internet-Based Radicalization as Enculturation to Violent Deviant Subcultures." *Deviant Behavior* 38 (8): 855–69.

<sup>56</sup> Holt, 2017.

by Jock Young, Holt argues that subcultures, or “group[s] with values, norms, traditions, and rituals” that deviate from the “dominant culture” are subsequently formed.<sup>57</sup> In a process that parallels those described by Archetti, Tretheway, et al., Corman, Dugas, et al., and Holbrook, et al., extremist subcultures—or what may be thought of as “communities” of like-minded individuals—form online.<sup>58</sup> These subcultures frequently use relevant imagery and symbols to brand their subculture, and as cohesive groups, more easily and efficiently pass extremist messaging between participants and others online, very likely contributing to the potential for radicalization.<sup>59</sup> In more recent work, Holt, et al. focus specifically on the impact of extremist subcultures (or online organizations) on radicalization, and find some extremists radicalized through a “collegial process,” whereby the individual’s engagement in extremist forums and other online communities contributed significantly to radicalization. Through these groups, extremists accept the values of the community they engaged with.<sup>60</sup> Holt also notes that the widespread and diffuse nature of the internet and social media has “flattened access to radical ideologies,” increasing the difficulty in determining the level of true engagement individuals have with a particular ideology or belief, and their involvement in groups.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Young, Jock. 2010. “Subcultural Theories: Virtues and Vices.” p. 110–135 in *Anomie, Strain and Subcultural Theories of Crime*, edited by R. Agnew and J. Kaufman. Westport, CT: Ashgate, as cited in Holt, Thomas J., Joshua D. Freilich, and Steven M. Chermak. 2017. “Internet-Based Radicalization as Enculturation to Violent Deviant Subcultures.” *Deviant Behavior* 38 (8): 855–69.

<sup>58</sup> Holt, et al., 2017.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> Holt, Thomas J., Joshua D. Freilich, Steven M. Chermak, Colleen Mills, and Jason Silva. 2019. “Loners, Colleagues, or Peers? Assessing the Social Organization of Radicalization.” *American Journal of Criminal Justice* 44 (1): 83–105.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*



## Lone Actor Violence: Justification and Implications

Consideration of the reasons for, and implications of, extremist violence is also well represented in the literature. Mark Juergensmeyer's recent work goes beyond a conception of terrorism's goal to create political change through "the causing of fear and coercion through fear,"<sup>62</sup> and instead considers it a form of what he calls "performance violence," as the "dramatic," "symbolic," and "theatrical" effects of terrorist attacks are increasingly broadcast on a global scale via the internet and television.<sup>63</sup> Under these conditions, according to Juergensmeyer, a lone actor can have as much of an impact on the public as a large group. Here, terrorist attacks are also carried out for the strategic purpose of gaining the attention of the media.<sup>64</sup> Juergensmeyer's analysis of the implications of "lone wolf" attacks also parallel the findings of Archetti and Holbrook, et al., as he argues such attacks have served as "collective events" that bring people together through the "power of performance."<sup>65</sup> Within this paradigm, lone attackers may brand their attacks with an ideology to both justify their violence *and* "link [their] actions to larger imagined audiences."<sup>66</sup> However, under the conception of terrorist attacks as performance violence, attack utility depends on both the attacker's and audience's perception of the attack, which may differ between several members of an attacker's actual audience.<sup>67</sup> While Martha Crenshaw argues for a strategic viewpoint of the

<sup>62</sup> Silke, Andrew, *Routledge Handbook of Terrorism and Counterterrorism*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2019.

<sup>63</sup> English, Richard, *Terrorism: How to Respond*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

<sup>64</sup> Juergensmeyer, Mark. "Killing before an Audience: Terrorism as Performance Violence." In *Constructions of Terrorism: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Research and Policy*, edited by Stohl Michael, Burchill Richard, and Englund Scott, 67-78. Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2017.

<sup>65</sup> Juergensmeyer, 2017.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

meaning of terrorist violence (i.e., stemming from an “internal, strategic logic,” rather than violence for the sake of violence), Juergensmeyer expands on this view by arguing high-profile terrorist attacks can be both “performative acts” (to cause change) *and* “performance events” (to make a symbolic statement). The meaning(s) of an attack, therefore, may mean different things to members of an audience.<sup>68,69</sup>

Additional research by Katarzyna Jasko, et al. on the factors that motivate radicalized individuals to carry out violence indicates some individuals may be motivated by the desire to gain significance. In their study on domestic radicalization, and the role of individuals’ “quest for significance” as a motivating factor for domestic extremists’ engagement in violence, Jasko, et al. rely upon Arie Kruglanski, et al.’s “significance quest theory,” which suggests individuals’ desire to “matter, to be someone, to have respect,” is a motivating factor in the radicalization process.<sup>70,71</sup> Such a desire, or “quest,” may be initiated based on multiple perceptions of the loss of significance. Jasko, et al.’s research suggests conditions that create the perception of a loss of significance by individuals (e.g., experiencing failure, social rejection, etc.) are more likely to inspire individuals to engage in violence.<sup>72</sup> Kruglanski, et al. also note the factor of significance does not—on its own—ensure that individuals will engage in violent extremism.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>68</sup> Crenshaw, Martha. “The Logic of Terrorism: Terrorist Behavior as Strategic Choice,” in Reich, Walter, *Origins of Terrorism: Psychologies, Ideologies, Theologies, States of Mind*. Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1998.

<sup>69</sup> Juergensmeyer, 2017.

<sup>70</sup> Kruglanski, Arie W., Michele J. Gelfand, Jocelyn J. Bélanger, Anna Sheveland, Malkanthi Hetiarachchi, and Rohan Gunaratna. 2014. “The Psychology of Radicalization and Deradicalization: How Significance Quest Impacts Violent Extremism.” *Political Psychology* 35 (February): 69–93.

<sup>71</sup> Jasko, Katarzyna, Gary LaFree, and Arie Kruglanski. 2017. “Quest for Significance and Violent Extremism: The Case of Domestic Radicalization.” *Political Psychology* 38 (5): 815–31.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> Kruglanski, et al., 2014.

The above process suggests widely disseminated extremist manifestos authored by high-profile extremist attackers may indicate shifts in an extremist ideology. Extremist manifestos are inherently ideological, containing the beliefs and ideas of the author; may be considered—or employ—forms of narrative, through the inclusion of autobiographical details, or perspectives on past or current socio-political conditions; are almost certainly, to at least some extent, the product of the complex online/offline system of communication extremists engage in, including online subcultures; and once disseminated, also serve as ideological content bolstered by high-profile extremist violence within this same system. While manifestos are only one of many platforms extremists may use to communicate, the above characteristics and context of extremists manifestos suggests they may be uniquely indicative of shifts in extremist ideology. Some recent research has been done to measure change in ideologies using the content of manifestos, and similar material.<sup>74</sup> However, relatively little research exists on the nature of white supremacy ideology and communication, and even less exists on the nature of white supremacy extremist manifestos and their potential implications for the white supremacy ideology. The present work seeks to contribute to these areas in the literature, and serve as a baseline for future work.

## **Hypothesis and Methods**

As discussed above, the current study seeks to understand the extent to which manifestos authored by high-profile extremist attackers may indicate shifts in an extremist ideology. The primary focus of this study is, therefore, on the transmission of ideas throughout the complex system of communication the online realm and other

<sup>74</sup> Williams, Michelle Hale. 2010. "Can Leopards Change Their Spots? Between Xenophobia and Trans-Ethnic Populism among West European Far Right Parties," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 16, 16 (1): 111.

information sources afford extremists. Manifestos authored by extremist attackers are assessed to serve as a highly influential communication vector for extremist ideas and perceptions of the world: they contain the ideological perspectives of the author, are bolstered by high-profile violence, and may be proliferated throughout the online realm and within subcultures made up of like-minded individuals. However, the complexities surrounding the communication of ideas, and the variable nature of ideologies, suggest that while some individuals may be like-minded, they may interpret extremist messaging differently, and/or adhere to different aspects of an ideology (e.g., have grievances with different portions of the population, or adhere to different aspects of an ideology). Considering the role of extremist manifestos in this context, the following hypothesis is proposed: the primary ideological themes and content of selected white supremacy extremist attackers' manifestos, when compared consecutively, will persist across the manifestos, but some shifts in secondary and tertiary themes will occur between them.

As this research study seeks to understand the degree to which ideological content within manifestos authored by extremist attackers may change over time, a comparative case study using the continuum or dosage sampling strategy will be used. Each selected white supremacy extremist attack—and its corresponding manifesto—will be considered a case, and the content of each manifesto will be compared with that of the others within the sample. Content analysis of each manifesto will be performed to measure the white supremacy ideology purveyed by each attacker. Codes will be generated per a bottom-up coding strategy to account for all pertinent ideological themes and variations that exist between the four cases. Comparisons of ideological content within each manifesto per the resulting coding schema, using single code counts, will be made to detect and measure

relevant shifts in ideological themes. Code co-occurrence counts will also be used to compare the manifestos, and account for the relationships between pertinent themes each attacker purveyed. For the purposes of this study, the occurrence of a relatively novel theme not detected in a previous case, including its appearance in a subsequent case, or cases, will be considered a “shift.”<sup>75</sup>

To assess the nature of the white supremacy ideology, a definition of white supremacy based primarily on that used by the Anti-Defamation League will be used. For the purposes of this study, white supremacy will be defined as the following: a collection of belief systems, each of which based upon one or more of the following core tenets; (1) white people should have dominance over non-white people, or people of different backgrounds; (2) white people should live together, separately from non-white people in their own, whites-only society; (3) white people have their own “culture” that is superior to all other cultures; and (4) white people are genetically superior to other people.<sup>76</sup> Themes considered to be “core” ideological themes will be based on these tenets.

While the above will be considered the core tenets of the white supremacy ideology, the ideology encompasses several more themes which may be considered secondary or tertiary in nature. Some will be pertinent to this study. These themes expand beyond concerns specific to racial differences and the superiority of the white race, and may include, but are in no way limited to, such themes as a belief that the increasing immigration of non-white people into various countries puts the white race at risk of

<sup>75</sup> Note: the word “shift” is not intended to suggest a completely novel theme to the white supremacy ideology, but merely a “relatively” novel theme, as observed in the chosen sample. “Shift” is intentionally used here to suggest fluctuations in themes over time.

<sup>76</sup> “White Supremacy,” ADL, accessed June 22, 2020, <https://www.adl.org/resources/glossary-terms/white-supremacy>.

extinction; a broad, conspiracy-based belief that Jewish people are responsible for these inflows of non-white immigrants, and control or manipulate these and other global socio-political forces to their advantage using the media and other sources of influence; and that some action must be taken to counter these forces, sometimes with violence, to save the white race (Note: for the purposes of this study, “white supremacy extremism” or “extremism” will be used to describe those holding a white supremacist ideology that either intend to, or have already, carried out violence based on their ideology.)<sup>77,78</sup> Additionally, in other conceptions of white supremacy, the protection of the white race is frequently associated with the protection or preservation of “identity,” “heritage,” “culture,” as well as what are perceived as traditional Christian values.<sup>79</sup> Terms such as “white genocide” may be used to describe the perceived threat to the white race from such forces as non-white immigration.<sup>80</sup>

This study relies upon a sample of four white supremacy extremist attackers, and their manifestos. Each attacker was chosen based on multiple characteristics to ensure both continuity across the sample and variation in the white supremacy ideology, and to track the degree of potential ideological shift between each attacker’s manifesto. For the purposes of this study, the white supremacy extremist attackers chosen hold the following characteristics: (1) apparent adherence to the white supremacy ideology as described above; (2) are responsible for carrying out an attack resulting in at least one fatality—

<sup>77</sup> “White Supremacy,” ADL, accessed June 22, 2020, <https://www.adl.org/resources/glossary-terms/white-supremacy>.

<sup>78</sup> Shaffer, Ryan. 2017. “The Extreme Right and Neo-Nazism in the Post-War United States,” *Understanding angry groups: Multidisciplinary perspectives on their motivations and effects on society*. Praeger/ABC-CLIO, 189.

<sup>79</sup> “Alt Right: A Primer on the New White Supremacy.” ADL. Accessed June 27, 2020. <https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounders/alt-right-a-primer-on-the-new-white-supremacy>.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

apparently motivated by a white supremacy ideology; (3) authored a manifesto identifying his/her motivations and justifications for the attack, and worldviews; (4) distributed the manifesto online prior to conducting the attack; and (5) referenced a previous attacker sampled, or are referenced by a subsequent attacker sampled, as inspiration in a manifesto. The study's sample is scoped to a series of manifestos authored by attackers who reference one another as inspiration—one potential measure of shared ideology—to more directly account for potential shifts in the ideology, or the lack thereof, between them. Table 1 below provides details on how the above characteristics apply to the four chosen cases: Dylann Roof, Brenton Tarrant, John Earnest, and Patrick Crusius.

### Anticipated Results

Given the qualities of manifestos and the nature of the complex online communication system they appear to emanate from and are purveyed within, some specific results may be expected if the hypothesis is true, and others if it is false. If the hypothesis is true, the core themes defined above would very likely be prominent (i.e., high in code count) across all of the manifestos. These themes would likely revolve around a general belief in the superiority of the white race and/or anti-Semitic sentiment, and both purvey opposition to those considered inferior (i.e., non-white people, Jews) and call for, or encourage, action to counter the perceived threats from each attackers' target(s) of bias. Additionally, it should be expected that some secondary or tertiary themes related to the core themes will differ between the manifestos. While it is not possible to predict what patterns may exist, it is possible—given the nature of online subcultures—that the appearance of some themes in a manifesto may lead to their

appearance in subsequent manifestos. These results would indicate ideological shifts occurred.

**Table 1 – Sampled Attacks and Manifesto Details**

Attacker	Attack Date	Location	Target	Deaths	Manifesto	Primary Themes	Referenced Inspiration	Site Posted
Dylann Roof <sup>81</sup>	6/17/2015	Charleston, SC	Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church	9	The Last Rhodesian	Anti-African American	(Referenced by) Brenton Tarrant	Personal website
Brenton Tarrant <sup>82, 83, 84, 85, 86</sup>	3/15/2019	Christchurch, New Zealand	Al Noor Mosque, Linwood Mosque	51	The Great Replacement	Anti-Muslim, Anti-Immigration	Dylann Roof, Anders Breivik	Twitter, 8chan
John Earnest <sup>87, 88</sup>	4/27/2019	Poway, CA	Chabad of Poway Synagogue	1	An Open Letter	Anti-Semitism	Brenton Tarrant	8chan
Patrick Crusius <sup>89, 90, 91</sup>	8/3/2019	El Paso, TX	Walmart	23	The Inconvenient Truth	Anti-Hispanic	Brenton Tarrant	8chan

<sup>81</sup> Sanchez, R., Payne, E. “Charleston church shooting: Who is Dylann Roof?” CNN. December 16, 2016. Accessed June 22, 2020. <https://www.cnn.com/2015/06/19/us/charleston-church-shooting-suspect/index.html>.

<sup>82</sup> Van Sant, S. “Accused Shooter In New Zealand Mosque Attacks Charged With Terrorism.” NPR. May 21, 2019. Accessed June 22, 2020. <https://www.npr.org/2019/05/21/725390449/accused-shooter-in-new-zealand-mosque-attacks-charged-with-terrorism>.

<sup>83</sup> “Christchurch shootings: Brenton Tarrant pleads guilty to 51 murders,” BBC, March 26, 2020, Accessed June 23, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-52044013>

<sup>84</sup> Garrison, Joey. “‘Violent terrorist’: Who is the white supremacist suspected in New Zealand mosque shootings?” USA Today. March 15, 2019. Accessed June 23, 2020. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2019/03/15/new-zealand-christchurch-mosque-shootings-who-brenton-tarrant/3172550002/>.

<sup>85</sup> Tarrant, Brenton. 2019. “The Great Replacement: Towards a New Society,” Accessed on May 30, 2020. [https://www.ilfoglio.it/userUpload/The\\_Great\\_Replacementconvertito.pdf](https://www.ilfoglio.it/userUpload/The_Great_Replacementconvertito.pdf).

<sup>86</sup> Mezzofiore, G., O’Sullivan, D. “El Paso mass shooting is at least the third atrocity linked to 8chan this year.” CNN. Updated August 5, 2019. Accessed July 5, 2020. <https://www.cnn.com/2019/08/04/business/el-paso-shooting-8chan-biz/index.html>.

<sup>87</sup> Hanna, J., Simon, D. “The suspect in Poway synagogue shooting used an assault rifle and had extra magazines, prosecutors said.” CNN. Updated April 30, 2019. Accessed June 23, 2020. <https://www.cnn.com/2019/04/30/us/california-synagogue-shooting-investigation/index.html>.

<sup>88</sup> Earnest, John. 2019. “An open letter.” Accessed on May 30, 2020. <https://besh.bard.edu/files/2019/06/Earnest-Manifesto-042719.pdf>; Crusius, Patrick. 2019. “The Inconvenient Truth.” Accessed on May 30, 2020. <https://files.catbox.moe/fr3h25.pdf>.

<sup>89</sup> “El Paso Walmart shooting suspect pleads not guilty to new federal charges,” KTSN, July 24, 2020, Accessed August 9, 2020, <https://www.ktsn.com/local/el-paso-news/el-paso-walmart-shooting-suspect-pleads-not-guilty-to-new-federal-charges/>.

<sup>90</sup> Chris, Graham. “Patrick Crusius: El Paso shooting suspect fuels fear of increasing white supremacist threat.” Telegraph. August 4, 2019. Accessed June 14, 2020. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/08/04/patrick-crusius-el-paso-shooting-suspect-fuels-fears-increasing/>.

<sup>91</sup> Todd, B., Maxouris, C., Vera, A. “The El Paso shooting suspect showed no remorse or regret, police say.” August 6, 2019. Accessed June 23, 2020. <https://www.cnn.com/2019/08/05/us/el-paso-suspect-patrick-crusius/index.html>.



If the hypothesis is proven false, two results are to be expected. First, the core ideological themes may differ significantly between the manifestos. These results are highly unlikely as the white supremacy ideology is based on the core tenets outlined above. If these results were found, it would suggest that at least some of the attackers did not actually adhere to a white supremacy ideology. Second, peripheral secondary or tertiary themes related to core themes would not significantly differ or change between the manifestos, suggesting each attacker very closely mirrored their predecessor(s) and/or adhered to the very same core and peripheral tenets of the white supremacy ideology.

### Limitations

There are a few key limitations to this study that should be noted. The first concerns the study's scope. This study is concerned only with the extent to which manifestos may indicate ideological change, not cause it. Despite the processes described in the literature review that very likely indicate manifestos are influential in shifting ideologies, time limitations warrant scoping the project toward assessing whether or not ideological change—or shifts—takes place. The study is therefore designed to detect and measure potential ideological changes within the four selected manifestos as a baseline for future work focused on understanding the causes of such change, and how changes may be measured using additional ideological content.

The second set of limitations are related to the study's sample size and chosen cases. The study's sample size is fairly small, relying on only four manifestos/attacks. The chosen manifestos also vary greatly in size, with Tarrant's at 87 pages, Earnest's at six pages, and Roof and Crusius' each at four pages. Consideration for this variation was given to the coding and analysis processes detailed below by lowering the threshold for

what was deemed a significant number of occurrences for particular themes in Roof, Earnest, and Crusius' manifestos. Code counts deemed "significant" were based on the relative frequency of the counts between the manifestos, as well as the content of the excerpts coded (e.g., in some cases, one occurrence of a particular theme present in a previous manifesto was considered significant based on the aberrancy of the theme, its similarity to the previously observed theme, and its relationship with other themes pertinent to the white supremacy ideology).

Finally, Norwegian attacker Anders Breivik was initially chosen as the first of four white supremacy extremist attackers to be sampled, as each of the required attacker criteria were met.<sup>92</sup> However, further consideration of the length of Breivik's manifesto (over 1,500 pages), the amount of time required for the analysis of its content, and the amount of time available for this study warranted omitting Breivik from the sample. A follow-on study would ideally include Breivik in the sample, as Tarrant cites Breivik repeatedly as inspiration for his attack, and their manifestos share many themes—though differ in significant ways. The most pertinent of these similarities and differences will be briefly noted for context in the following sections.

## **Data and Results**

Data for this study was acquired from the content analysis of manifestos authored by white supremacy extremist attackers. All four manifestos used in this study were publicly available and acquired online. Due to the size of the manifestos, and the

<sup>92</sup> Berwick, A. 2011. "2083 – A European Declaration of Independence." Accessed on May 30, 2020. <http://publicintelligence.net/anders-behring-breiviks-complete-manifesto-2083-a-european-declaration-of-independence/>.

abundance of data acquired, an online qualitative data analysis application, Dedoose<sup>93</sup>, was used to analyze the content of each. Content analysis was performed using a bottom-up coding process applied to all four manifestos to account for all ideological themes that exist between them, and to create a standardized set of codes for comparison.<sup>94</sup> In the first phase of coding, all manifestos were reviewed, and preliminary codes were assigned to all excerpts in each manifesto with themes related to the white supremacy ideology. In many cases, codes were also assigned to themes that appeared to be indirectly tied to ideological themes, if they occurred with what was judged to be a high frequency.

As previously mentioned, what was judged to be a “high frequency” and significant depended on each themes’ relative frequency, the context of the theme, its aberrancy (relative to the other themes each attacker purveyed), and/or its relationship to previously observed themes. Derogatory words or phrases, terms or background information used to justify and frame their respective attacks, the use of analogies, and the repetitive use of the same terms were also used as indicators of material that should be coded in each manifesto. Codes were applied in an overlapping fashion to relevant excerpts to gain accurate code counts, and to account for the relationships between the themes each attacker exhibited.

As part of the bottom-up coding strategy, the resultant set of preliminary codes, totaling 243, were then sorted based on the type of code (i.e., what facet of the ideology the coded material described). Codes that occurred only once and/or were deemed

<sup>93</sup> Dedoose Version 8.3.17, web application for managing, analyzing, and presenting qualitative and mixed method research data (2020). Los Angeles, CA: SocioCultural Research Consultants, LLC [www.dedoose.com](http://www.dedoose.com)

<sup>94</sup> A top-down approach was considered. However, given the apparent variation in white supremacy ideologies between the attackers as purveyed by their manifestos, a bottom-up approach was deemed more appropriate in order to account for this variation, and achieve as accurate of a comparison as possible.

irrelevant to the ideology (e.g., served as a cursory level descriptor of a referenced idea, occurred only once, etc.) were removed. This resulted in a list of approximately 200 codes, which were then re-sorted by type, and duplicate codes—or those deemed to describe very similar ideological tenets (e.g., codes assigned to derogatory words or slurs based on the same bias)—were merged. A second phase of coding was conducted to ensure all codes were merged and assigned accurately. Of the resultant list of 89 codes (19 parent codes, and 70 child codes), 11 parent codes<sup>95</sup> and 36 child codes were considered for this study, and are included in Appendix A. These codes had the highest counts and were more directly related to the white supremacy ideology and its secondary or tertiary themes, or were relatively unique in nature and appeared in similar ways between the manifestos. Code co-occurrence counts for each manifesto were also retrieved using Dedoose. The code co-occurrence counts for Tarrant, Earnest, and Crusius’ manifestos are included in Appendix B.<sup>96</sup>

### Race, Society Perspective

The code counts for each theme across all four manifestos vary widely, though some consistencies and noteworthy patterns exist. One of the highest theme counts across all four manifestos was a core theme of the white supremacy ideology: the attacker’s primary target of their racial or ethno-religious (i.e., anti-Semitic) bias, and their perspective of race in society. As can be seen in Table 2 below (taken from Appendix A), which includes code counts for each of the themes falling under this category, the highest

<sup>95</sup> “Race/Society Perspective,” “Replacement/Invasion/Population/Preservation,” “Own Land/Traditions/Culture/Heritage/People/Nation,” “Conspiracy/Denial,” “Christianity/Religion,” “Political Spectrum/Society,” “Ecofascism/Environment,” “Anti-Corporatism/NGO,” “Economy/Market/Jobs/Labour,” “Accelerationism/Balkanization,” “Encourage Action/Threat.”

<sup>96</sup> Code co-occurrence counts were not referenced in the results section for Roof’s manifesto, so were omitted.

code counts for themes revolving around each attacker’s primary target of bias aligned with their attack targets. The anti-African American theme was the highest for Roof, anti-Muslim for Tarrant,<sup>97</sup> anti-Semitism for Earnest, and anti-Hispanic for Crusius.<sup>98</sup> All four manifestos were consistent in the prevalence of themes regarding the conception of race as either white or not white (though Crusius’ count was lower), as well as the need for separation between the races via rhetoric either supportive of segregation, or in opposition to the concept of race mixing.

*Table 2 – Race/Society Perspective Themes: Code Counts*

Coded Themes	Dylann Roof	Brenton Tarrant	John Earnest	Patrick Crusius
<b>Race / Society Perspective</b>	46	89	59	22
Anti-African / American	17	1	1	0
Anti-Diversity	0	6	0	1
Anti-Hispanic	1	0	1	9
Anti-Muslim	0	14	2	0
Anti-Semitic	4	2	35	0
Pro-Segregation / Anti-Race Mixing	3	3	2	4
Race - White & Not White	19	26	11	3

## Replacement

The most prominent set of themes, with the highest number of code counts between its subthemes as indicated in Table 3 below, revolved around the concept of replacement, and very likely indicate carry-over in themes from Tarrant to both Earnest and Crusius. These themes occurred either very little, or none at all, in Roof’s manifesto. This pattern in theme intensity was largely driven by Tarrant’s manifesto, which had significantly high counts for sub-themes regarding the following: opposition to

<sup>97</sup> As mentioned earlier, this theme is very prominent in Breivik’s manifesto.

<sup>98</sup> A theme coded “Anti-Non-European” was the second highest count in this category of themes for Tarrant, but was omitted from primary consideration as “Anti-Muslim” occurred twice as many times. The theme is likely, at least tangentially related to the “Race-White & Not White” theme referenced above.

immigration; conception of immigrants and immigration as “invaders” or an “invasion,” respectively; use of the term “replacement” or similar terms when discussing concerns on immigrants replacing those perceived to be either European—or white; concern on disparities in the size of European or white populations in comparison to those of non-European or non-white populations in both European countries and the United States; the use of the word “genocide” to describe the destruction of the European or white race; and the need to preserve the race.<sup>99</sup>

*Table 3 – Replacement Themes: Code Counts*

		Dylann Roof	Brenton Tarrant	John Earnest	Patrick Crusius
<b>Replacement / Invasion / Population / Preservation</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>40</b>	
Anti-Immigration	0	39	2	18	
Invaders / Invasion	0	60	0	7	
Replacement	0	67	2	8	
Genocide	0	4	6	1	
Preserve Race	1	12	6	1	
Population / Disparity	5	42	0	5	
Pro-Deportation	0	9	0	4	

The “Anti-Immigration,” “Invaders/Invasion,” and “Replacement”<sup>100</sup> themes endured the most from Tarrant’s to Crusius’ manifesto, with significantly higher counts for each than Roof or Earnest. The specific use of the words “invaders” and “invasion” by Crusius following Tarrant strongly suggests inspiration, and the acceptance of ideas. The “Genocide” and “Preserve Race” themes appear the most in Tarrant’s and Earnest’s manifestos, with “Genocide” appearing slightly more in Earnest’s, suggesting some potential carry-over in themes. The “Population / Disparity” theme was the most intense

<sup>99</sup> Tarrant, 2019.

<sup>100</sup> All of these themes appear frequently, often verbatim, especially “replacement,” “invaders” or “invasion” and strong opposition to immigration—directed almost entirely against Muslims, in Anders Breivik’s 2011 manifesto, entitled “2083: A European Declaration of Independence.”; Berwick, 2011. “2083 – A European Declaration of Independence.” Accessed on May 30, 2020. <http://publicintelligence.net/anders-behring-breiviks-complete-manifesto-2083-a-european-declaration-of-independence/>.

in Tarrant's manifesto, though some elements of this theme appeared in both Roof's and Crusius' manifestos.<sup>101</sup> One of the greatest contributing factors to this particular theme's high count was Tarrant's frequent reference to disparities in "birthrates" and "fertility rates" between perceived non-white, non-European immigrant populations and European or white populations.<sup>102</sup> The last considered sub-theme under the "Replacement" theme discussed above revolved around strong support for deportation. This theme paralleled the patterns seen in the frequency of the "Anti-Immigration," "Invaders/Invasion," and "Replacement" themes, appearing only within Tarrant and Crusius' manifestos.<sup>103</sup>

#### Land, Tradition, Culture, Heritage, People, Nation

Themes surrounding land, tradition, culture, heritage, and people<sup>104</sup> were also prevalent, particularly in Tarrant's manifesto, though some occurred in all four as indicated by Table 4. These terms were frequently used as core elements in defining the attackers' conception of European or white people, oftentimes framed as elements under threat by non-European, non-white, or Jewish people.<sup>105</sup> While Tarrant purveyed these themes the most, Earnest and Crusius also used some of these themes, and it occurred only once in Roof's manifesto. The themes "Ethnicity," "Identity," and "Community" or "Unity" were specific to Tarrant and Crusius' manifestos, though less in Crusius', suggesting some carry-over. Tarrant's manifesto also strongly promoted nationalism, a

<sup>101</sup> This is likely to be expected across the ideology. Increasing population disparities and replacement concerns are quite similar in nature.

<sup>102</sup> Tarrant, 2019.

<sup>103</sup> This pattern is to be expected, given the likely correlation that exists between anti-immigration and replacement concerns, and the subsequent perceived need to correct or counter these forces. Code co-occurrence counts for the anti-immigration theme were relatively high for the themes of invaders/invasion, population disparity, and replacement.

<sup>104</sup> Breivik employed nearly all of these, verbatim, frequently in his manifesto; Berwick, 2011.

<sup>105</sup> These themes were also frequently used together, so were merged into one code during the coding and review process.

separate sub-theme, and occurred only once in Earnest’s manifesto, likely indicating minimal carry-over.

*Table 4 – Land, Tradition, Culture, Heritage, People, Nation Themes: Code Counts*

		Dylann Roof	Brenton Tarrant	John Earnest	Patrick Crusius
<b>Land / Traditions / Culture / Heritage / People / Nation</b>	2	112	5	8	
Community / "Unity"	0	7	0	2	
Ethnicity	0	26	0	1	
Identity	1	6	0	1	
Land, Tradition, Culture, Heritage, People	1	49	4	4	
Nationalism	0	22	1	0	

### Conspiracy Theory

Elements of conspiracy theory or denial existed within all four attackers’ manifestos, as illustrated in Table 5. These themes occurred significantly more in Tarrant and Earnest’s, and were largely unique to each of the attackers in nature, though some overlap is evident, particularly in Roof’s. Earnest contributed the most to this theme, specifically focusing on a conspiracy that Jews are controlling and manipulating socio-political conditions—in part, via the media—to both facilitate immigration and destroy the white race. Earnest repeatedly characterized Jews as deceitful, purveyors of lies, and manipulative. Roof and Tarrant both purveyed a few elements of this sub-theme. The conspiracy Tarrant primarily adhered to is largely based on a belief that the media and state are tools used, sometimes with the support of corporations, to counter efforts to exact needed political or social change either by controlling information, or disseminating disinformation, to the advantage of non-European/non-white people. While Crusius displayed some of the “Media/State” conspiracy theme, much of his conspiracy-based beliefs appeared to focus on the perception of an impending political left takeover in the United States. In addition to some elements of Jewish conspiracy, Roof purveyed



elements of historical denial in claiming the negative portrayal of slavery, racial segregation, and the treatment of African Americans were “historical lies, exaggerations and myths.”<sup>106</sup>

*Table 5 – Conspiracy Theory Themes: Code Counts*

		Dylann Roof	Brenton Tarrant	John Earnest	Patrick Crusius
<b>Conspiracy / Denial</b>	4	10	18	7	
Historical Denial	2	0	0	0	
Jewish Conspiracy	2	1	16	0	
Left Takeover	0	0	0	3	
Media/State	0	9	2	1	

### Christianity

Christianity, or religion, was a theme significantly prevalent in only Tarrant and Earnest’s manifestos, occurring even more so in Earnest’s, as can be seen in Table 6. Themes of defending European—or white peoples’—faiths and churches from encroachment or replacement by non-European/non-white populations were prevalent. For example, Tarrant addresses Christians specifically, and identifies the “Saracens” (i.e., Muslims) as a threat against Christians.<sup>107</sup> Earnest uses religion in a similar fashion, addresses his “brothers in Christ,” and uses multiple quotes from the Bible. The white race is identified by Earnest as “[God’s] creation,” and Jews are considered responsible for the persecution of Christians.<sup>108</sup>

*Table 6 - Christianity/Religion Themes: Code Counts*

		Dylann Roof	Brenton Tarrant	John Earnest	Patrick Crusius
<b>Christianity / Religion</b>	0	12	15	0	

<sup>106</sup> Roof, 2015.

<sup>107</sup> Tarrant, 2019.

<sup>108</sup> Earnest, 2019.

### Political, Anti-Left, 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment and Gun Rights

Tarrant and Crusius both purveyed political themes in their manifestos, while only a few were present in Earnest's, and none in Roof's as illustrated by the data in Table 7 below. This theme encompassed several ideas, to include: both political parties' inaction with—or there being no political solution to—the problem of immigration, or “replacement;” targeting “traitorous” politicians with an attack; and the need to support politicians with more radical views to achieve radical change.<sup>109,110</sup> The sub-theme of “Anti-Left” was most prevalent with Crusius (occurring only twice in Tarrant's manifesto) and notably co-occurred the most with the aforementioned “Left Takeover” conspiracy, “Anti-Hispanic,” and “Anti-Immigration” themes. These results indicate Crusius very likely associated the political left with Hispanics, and believed the political left was trying to garner more power by facilitating the immigration of Hispanics into the United States. Tarrant's manifesto contained a variety of political sub-themes, to include anti-conservatism, anti-democracy, anti-capitalism, and anti-Marxism: none of which carried over to a significant degree into either Earnest or Crusius' manifestos.<sup>111</sup>

One notable political sub-theme which very likely carried over from Tarrant's manifesto into Earnest and Crusius' manifestos revolves around the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment and gun rights in the United States, also indicated in Table 7. This sub-theme is largely based on a conception of gun rights as a force creating conflict in the United States. Tarrant first introduces this theme in his manifesto while explaining why he chose to use a firearm for his attack (i.e., to create social discourse and facilitate conflict in the United States,

<sup>109</sup> Tarrant, 2019.

<sup>110</sup> Crusius, 2019.

<sup>111</sup> Note: This data was excluded from Appendix A to account for more pertinent data, though is mentioned here as the lack of carry-over of some political themes is still relevant to the study.

bringing attention to gun rights issues through the media attention the attack would have, thus affecting the politics of the United States “and thereby the political situation of the world”).<sup>112</sup> Earnest touches on this theme by stating he used a gun “for the same reason Brenton Tarrant used a gun,” then references an impending “revolution” before claiming the US government’s goal is to confiscate guns, and that a “civil war has just started.” Crusius appears to have accepted this theme as well by attributing the inability of Europeans to repel the “millions of invaders that plague their [countries]” to a lack of gun rights. He then states Europeans “have no choice but to sit back and watch their countries burn,” very likely suggesting that those in the United States *can* take action with firearms.<sup>113</sup>

**Table 7 – Political Themes: Code Counts**

Political Spectrum / Society	Dylann Roof Brenton Tarrant John Earnest Patrick Crusius			
	0	71	8	24
Political	0	15	3	8
2nd Amendment-Gun Rights	0	5	1	1
Anti-Left	0	2	0	9

### Eco-fascism, Environmental Concerns

A theme merging concerns on the preservation of the environment and white supremacy emerged in Tarrant’s manifesto as “eco-fascism,” and was very likely adopted by Crusius, whose manifesto also purveys similar themes—though in different ways. Within the same sentence, Tarrant self-identifies as an “Ethno-nationalist Eco-fascist,” and states his support of “Ethnic autonomy for all peoples with a focus on the preservation of nature, and the natural order.”<sup>114</sup> As Table 8 indicates below, the theme of

<sup>112</sup> Tarrant, 2019.

<sup>113</sup> Crusius, 2019.

<sup>114</sup> Tarrant, 2019.

“Eco-Fascism”<sup>115</sup> appeared only in Tarrant’s manifesto, though co-occurred the most with a sub-theme centered around concern for the preservation of the environment and nature, suggesting a strong relationship between the two. The “Environmentalism / Preserve Nature & Animals” and “Anti-Industrialization / Urbanization” sub-themes were prominent in Tarrant’s manifesto. A very similar pattern in theme/sub-theme intensity was found in Crusius’ manifesto. Crusius’ manifesto notably emphasizes concerns related to opposition to consumerism—and overconsumption—more so than Tarrant, as can be seen in the relatively high count of the sub-theme “Anti-Consumerism / Lifestyle.”<sup>116</sup>

*Table 8 – Eco-fascism, Environmental Themes: Code Counts*

		Dylann Roof	Brenton Tarrant	John Earnest	Patrick Crusius
<b>Ecofascism / Environment</b>	0	37	0	21	
Anti-Consumerism / Lifestyle	0	2	0	7	
Anti-Industrialization/Urbanization	0	5	0	2	
Eco-Fascism	0	9	0	0	
Environmentalism / Preserve Nature & Animals	0	21	0	12	

The difference in themes as described above, in conjunction with code co-occurrence data in Appendix B below, appears to indicate a potential divide in Tarrant and Crusius’ conception of the environment. In Tarrant’s manifesto, the sub-theme “Environmentalism / Preserve Nature & Animals” co-occurs the most with the aforementioned “Land, Traditions, Culture, Heritage, People, Nation” theme, as well as the “Nationalism” subtheme, those surrounding the “Replacement” theme, and “Anti-

<sup>115</sup> Breivik does not reference eco-fascism at all in his manifesto, or support for the tenets this concept encompasses, and instead expresses opposition to environmentalism and those who support it, repeatedly referring to these individuals as “enviro-communists,” Berwick, 2011. Tarrant appears to be the first to introduce this theme in a widely distributed manifesto following a high-profile white supremacy extremist attack.

<sup>116</sup> Based on the content of Crusius’ manifesto, this theme may be summarized as opposition to a society perceived to be overconsuming resources, to the ultimate detriment of the environment.

Industrialization / Urbanization.” In Crusius’ manifesto, the two themes that co-occur the most with “Environmentalism / Preserve Nature & Animals” are the “Anti-Consumerism / Lifestyle” and “Anti-Corporatism/NGO” (non-governmental organization) themes.

These differences in theme association suggest that while Tarrant and Crusius both purveyed strong concerns related to the preservation of the environment, their conception of those concerns was very likely different: Tarrant associated the preservation of the environment more directly with the preservation of the European (or white) race; Crusius associated the preservation of the environment more closely with concerns regarding society’s overconsumption of resources and his opposition to corporations.

#### Anti-Corporatism, NGOs

The theme of “Anti-Corporatism/NGO” is also unique to Tarrant and Crusius’ manifestos, as indicated by the data in Table 9 below. Much of each attacker’s discontent with corporations, or NGOs, was primarily based on the perception of each as responsible for facilitating and promoting the immigration of those perceived to be non-European/non-white people into their countries. The code co-occurrence counts for the “Anti-Corporatism/NGO” theme in Tarrant and Earnest’s manifestos were highest for the “Anti-Immigration” and “Replacement” themes. Justification for this thought pattern may be seen in the “Economy” subtheme of “Workers/Labour/Automation,” included in Table 9, which was also specific to Tarrant and Crusius’ manifesto, and co-occurred to a significant degree with the “Anti-Corporatism/NGO” theme in both attackers’ manifestos. This theme, primarily concerned with the implications of cheap labor, and the potential loss of jobs as a result of the automation of labor, was frequently used by both attackers as justification for discontent with corporations, specifically. Both Tarrant and

Crusius identified corporations (NGOs as well, in Tarrant’s case) as responsible for either facilitating or promoting the immigration of those perceived to be non-European or non-white people into other countries—in part—through the provisioning of cheap labor to immigrants, contributing to the loss of jobs for European or white people.

*Table 9 – Anti-Corporatism/NGO and Economy Themes: Code Counts*

		Dylann Roof	Brenton Tarrant	John Earnest	Patrick Crusius
<b>Anti-Corporatism / NGO</b>	0	27	0	16	
<b>Economy / Market / Jobs / Labour</b>	0	35	2	14	
Workers / Labour / Automation	0	19	0	14	

### Accelerationism

There are some indications a particularly significant theme in Tarrant’s manifesto, “Accelerationism,” did carry-over largely into Earnest’s manifesto, and to a lesser degree into Crusius’ manifesto, very likely indicating influence or inspiration. Tarrant introduces the concept of accelerationism in a section entitled “Destabilization and Accelerationism: tactics for victory.” Tarrant describes the concept by arguing that “true change and the change we need to enact only arises in the great crucible of crisis. A gradual change is never going to achieve victory.” He then states that “stability and comfort are the enemies of revolutionary change,” and that “we must destabilize and discomfort society where ever possible.” Tarrant suggests this may be achieved through political action, or through violence, stating “It is far better to encourage radical, violent change regardless of its origins,” and suggests “radicalizing public discourse by both supporting, attacking, vilifying, radicalizing and exaggerating all societal conflicts,” and “attacking” or “assassinating” those perceived to be weak or less radical leaders on both sides of social

conflicts. Accelerationism is thus a tactic to encourage the destabilization of society through a variety of actions to “take control” of it, and enact the change desired.<sup>117</sup>

Accelerationism appears the most in Tarrant’s manifesto, though elements of this theme do occur a few times in Earnest’s, and only once in Crusius’ as indicated in Table 10 below. It is very likely, however, that the theme occurred indirectly to some degree in both Earnest and Crusius’ manifestos through two other inter-related themes: “Encourage Action” and “Violence / Revolution Necessary,” also indicated in Table 10. These themes both occurred in all four manifestos, though were far more prominent in Tarrant and Earnest’s, with the “Violence/Revolution Necessary” theme less prominent in Crusius’. The theme of “Accelerationism” in Tarrant’s manifesto co-occurred the most with the “Encourage Action/Threat” theme, suggesting a strong relationship between the two, as indicated in Appendix B.<sup>118</sup>

While it is difficult to conclude with high confidence that the theme of accelerationism as purveyed by Tarrant is solely responsible for the prominence of themes surrounding the encouragement of taking political or violent action—or the framing of violence and/or “revolution” as necessary—in Earnest’s manifesto, it is very likely to have had an influential effect on Earnest, and possibly Crusius. The theme of “Accelerationism” in Earnest’s manifesto co-occurred the most with the “Encourage Action” and “Violence/Revolution Necessary” sub-themes. Additionally, “Encourage Action” co-occurred the most with “Violence/Revolution Necessary.” A similar pattern

<sup>117</sup> Tarrant, 2019.

<sup>118</sup> The correlation between the two themes is not surprising, as they are quite similar in nature, however the “encourage action” and “violence/revolution necessary” themes were coded separately as they were used in multiple contexts across all four manifestos.

in correlation between these sub-themes exists in Crusius' manifesto as well, though is based on far fewer occurrences of each.

*Table 10 – Accelerationism, Encourage Action and/or Threat Themes: Code Counts*

		Dylann Roof	Brenton Tarrant	John Earnest	Patrick Crusius
<b>Accelerationism</b>	0	41	3	1	
Accelerationism	0	30	3	1	
<b>Encourage Action / Threat</b>	9	136	39	13	
Encourage Action	5	83	18	9	
Infamy	0	2	1	0	
Threat / Rid / Kill	0	24	6	2	
Violence / Revolution Necessary	2	26	14	2	

## Discussion

This study sought to understand to what extent manifestos authored by white supremacy extremist attackers may indicate shifts in the white supremacy ideology, and submitted the following hypothesis: (1) when compared, the core ideological themes of the white supremacy ideology expressed in manifestos would persist across the manifestos; and (2) that some shifts in secondary or tertiary themes related to these core themes would occur between the manifestos. In terms of the overall research question, the data and results as described above strongly suggest manifestos may indicate shifts in the white supremacy ideology. The hypothesis is also supported by the data, as the core tenets of the white supremacy ideology (i.e., a belief in the superiority of the white race, or ethno-religious bias as defined in the methods section) remained the same across all four manifestos. Furthermore, some shifts in what may be considered secondary or tertiary themes of the ideology did occur between attackers' manifestos, though not uniformly. The above findings, and their implications for the literature, will be discussed below.



### Core Ideological Themes – Consistency

The consistency and prevalence of themes related to a conception of racial or ethnic differences across all four manifestos, and the derogatory nature of these themes aimed at an audience representative of each attackers' attack target strongly supports the first part of the hypothesis. Upon first inspection, this finding appears to contradict the overall finding that manifestos may indicate ideological shifts—however—it is assessed, based on these being core themes of the white supremacy ideology, that significant shifts in these themes would not occur. The variety in type of bias between attackers (i.e., anti-African American, anti-Muslim, anti-Semitic, anti-Hispanic) also seems to contradict the findings regarding the first part of the hypothesis. However, these biases are assessed—based on the nature of the white supremacy ideology—to be based on one shared idea: a conception of the white race as superior to others.

The themes regarding concerns of “replacement” emanating within Tarrant and Crusius' manifestos were very likely, in some way, derived from this same shared belief. Elements of at least some of these themes should be expected in all white supremacy extremist manifestos. The same is likely generally true for white supremacy extremists' adoption of conspiracy theories or denial of historical facts: those who believe in the superiority of the white race and hold extreme biases may seek alternative explanations to the socio-political conditions they observe, in part to understand inaction in response to perceived threats, and justify taking action. A strong association between conspiracy and racial/ethno-religious bias is clearly visible in the prevalence of the “Jewish conspiracy” theme in Earnest's manifesto, as well as Tarrant's and Crusius' respective conspiracies regarding the media and the state, and a political left takeover. For Tarrant and Crusius,

both conspiracies ultimately stem from opposition to the immigration of non-white individuals into their countries. Additionally, while the “Encourage Action” and “Violence/Revolution Necessary” themes appear to be strongly related to the “Accelerationism” theme, the presence of themes revolving around the encouragement, or need, for action in all four manifestos is to be expected given the definition of white supremacy. These results, therefore, suggest that the first part of the hypothesis is true: that consistency in core themes will exist between the manifestos.

### Ideological Shifts and Manifestos

When considering secondary or tertiary themes related to those at the core of the white supremacy ideology, the data and results of this study appear to support the second part of the hypothesis: the occurrence of themes of this kind did change between the manifestos, indicating potential shifts in the ideology. These shifts are the most visible in the themes encompassed under “Eco-fascism,” as well as the “Anti-Corporatism/NGO,” “Political,” “Workers/Labour/Automation,” “Accelerationism,” and “Encourage Action” themes. Eco-fascism, and concerns regarding the environment did not occur in any manifesto considered in this study (including Breivik’s) before Tarrant. After Tarrant introduces this theme, the sub-themes of “Environmentalism / Preserve Nature & Animals,” “Anti-Industrialization/Urbanization,” and “Anti-Consumerism/Lifestyle” appear again in Crusius’ manifesto, suggesting some level of theme endurance. The “Anti-Consumerism/Lifestyle” theme’s apparent increase in intensity in Crusius’ manifesto is even more indicative of an ideological shift. This same pattern, as discussed earlier, emerges in the “Anti-Corporatism/NGO” and “Workers/Labour/Automation” themes, and manifests in a slightly different form in the prominence of the

“Christianity/Religion” theme in Earnest’s manifesto following Tarrant’s. These patterns indicate some themes endured following their introduction by a previous attacker.

The “Accelerationism,” and “Encourage Action” themes appear to suggest even stronger endurance, as these themes—purveyed the most by Tarrant—remain to some degree in both Earnest and Crusius’ manifestos. The way in which the “Political” theme’s pattern of occurrence supports the hypothesis is less clear: while the majority of this theme, and its sub-themes, occur in Tarrant and Crusius’ manifestos, it does appear in Earnest’s. Additionally, concerns on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment and gun rights are discussed to some extent in all three. Regardless, the “political” theme’s endurance—and more particularly, concerns regarding gun rights and their potential implications for initiatives revolving around the accelerationism theme—likely indicates an ideological shift. One noteworthy implication of differing types of endurance in an ideological theme, not fully considered in the hypothesis, is that a “shift” may not easily be determined based solely on the first appearance of a theme in a manifesto, or its apparent disappearance in a follow-on manifesto. Themes may appear once, and re-appear later on, suggesting a potential ideological shift.

#### Implications for Theories and the Literature: Ideology

The data and results of this study strongly support the literature discussed above, particularly on the complexities surrounding the nature of ideologies, and the online communication of the ideas they are based upon. The apparent shifts in ideological themes and the potential for themes to endure between manifestos supports a conception of ideologies as highly vulnerable to change. Each attacker’s adoption of a new theme is evidence of the adoption of a new idea, or set of ideas. The fact that some ideas appear to

endure across multiple attackers' manifestos also supports a conception of an ideology as socially constructed. The ways in which themes exist between all four manifestos, especially on the core themes of the white supremacy ideology, also support two of the key points raised in the literature by Tretheway, et al.: ideologies are based on shared ideas and perspectives of the world; and variation in ideologies (e.g., anti-African American vs. anti-Muslim, etc.) may be driven and shaped by the local/cultural contexts the ideas reside within. The emergence of themes centered around Christianity and political concerns, for instance, may be highly personal, and are likely driven by the socio-political/religious contexts individuals exist within.

### Communication

Patterns in ideological shifts and theme endurance across manifestos (i.e., means of communication) strongly support the findings submitted by Corman, et al., as well as Christina Archetti regarding communication. While certain themes did carry-over more so between Tarrant and Crusius' manifestos, these themes did not carry-over uniformly. For example, themes including "Christianity/Religion," "Encourage Action," "Violence / Revolution Necessary," and likely "Accelerationism" were more specific to Tarrant and Earnest's manifestos. Conversely, the prominent themes surrounding eco-fascism and environmentalism were more specific to Tarrant and Crusius' manifestos. These patterns suggest that ideas are not uniformly and directly transmitted between individuals via extremist communication, and are difficult to predict. One potential reason for this, which also supports Corman, et al.'s findings, is that themes which are considered more important to an individual's conception of the world—and his/her grievances—may be ingested over others considered relatively less important. Earnest, for example, aligned

with Tarrant on the themes of Christianity or religion, and those surrounding accelerationism and encouraging others to take action more so than Crusius. However, the majority of the remaining themes Earnest purveyed revolved purely around anti-Semitism, not the “Replacement” or “Anti-Immigration” themes Crusius subsequently purveyed. This suggests Earnest very likely prioritized themes in alignment with his primary concerns and target of bias (i.e., Jews, the need to act) over others previously prioritized by Roof and Tarrant.

Crusius’ apparent mirroring of Tarrant’s anti-immigration themes is very likely a result of the similarities in their perceptions of the targets of their biases (i.e., both Muslims and Hispanics as immigrants that are migrating into their respective countries). Tarrant’s use of these themes in his manifesto very likely resonated with Crusius, and possibly led to the adoption of other inter-related themes, as discussed above. However, while Crusius apparently adopted similar themes, such as environmental concerns, these themes did not appear to be adopted in the same way (e.g., Crusius’ association of environmentalism with the “Anti-Corporatism” and “Anti-Consumerism” themes, and Tarrant’s stronger association of environmentalism with the “Land, Tradition, Culture, Heritage, People, Nation” theme). This change in the relationship between themes, possibly occurring during the transmission of information via manifesto, likely supports Corman, et al.’s model of communication, and the implications of both the sender and recipient’s biases, perceptions, and conceptions of the world. Additionally, while it is difficult to assess the degree to which each attacker’s narrative influenced the next given the scope of this study, it could very likely have served to influence the adoption of themes not previously known or considered by each attacker.

## Radicalization

This study also appears to support other work conducted by Corman, as well as that of Archetti and Holt, et al. regarding the emergence of what may also be considered “imagined communities,” and the importance of subcultures in communication and radicalization.<sup>119</sup> The majority of the themes in Roof’s manifesto were specific to the core white supremacy themes previously discussed. Those that did appear outside of these core themes generally did not appear to carry-over into subsequent attackers’ manifestos. There are likely multiple reasons for this pattern stemming from the unique nature of the target of his bias in relation to the others, similar to Earnest’s case. However, Roof also explicitly references the Trayvon Martin case as the primary inspiration for his attack.<sup>120</sup> After reviewing the case, Roof describes how he Googled “black on White crime,” and immediately discovered the website for the Council for Conservative Citizens, a well-known U.S.-based white supremacist organization.<sup>121</sup> He goes on to describe how he continued to search and collect information online.<sup>122</sup> One reported source of information Roof relied upon was the neo-Nazi website The Daily Stormer.<sup>123</sup> This site both produces new content, and collects similar content from other sites.<sup>124</sup>

<sup>119</sup> Anderson, Benedict R., 2006.

<sup>120</sup> Trayvon Martin, a 17-year old, unarmed African American was shot to death by George Zimmerman on February 26, 2012 during an altercation. Zimmerman was acquitted of all charges related to the shooting on July 13, 2013; “Trayvon Martin Shooting Fast Facts.” CNN. Updated February 16, 2020. Accessed June 27, 2020. <https://www.cnn.com/2013/06/05/us/trayvon-martin-shooting-fast-facts/index.html>.

<sup>121</sup> “Council of Conservative Citizens.” SPLC. Accessed June 26, 2020. <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/council-conservative-citizens>.

<sup>122</sup> Roof, Dylann. 2015.

<sup>123</sup> Phillip, Abby. “Dylann Roof was active on white supremacist Web forum, group says.” Washington Post. June 22, 2015. Accessed July 5, 2020. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-nation/wp/2015/06/22/dylann-roof-was-active-on-white-supremacist-web-forum-southern-poverty-law-center-says/>.

<sup>124</sup> Phillip, Abby. “Dylann Roof was active on white supremacist Web forum, group says.” Washington Post. June 22, 2015. Accessed July 5, 2020. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-nation/wp/2015/06/22/dylann-roof-was-active-on-white-supremacist-web-forum-southern-poverty-law-center-says/>.

A similar process of communication and radicalization online through a “collegial” process, as described by Holt, very likely played a role in the radicalization of Tarrant, Earnest, and Crusius, and also very likely contributed to the receipt of one another’s manifestos, and the observed ideological overlap between them. Like Roof, all three posted their manifestos online. Earnest and Crusius both posted their manifestos on 8chan—an imageboard site known to have been associated with white supremacy, and other derogatory subjects.<sup>125</sup> Both likely communicated on, and gathered information from, this site and others like it. Tarrant’s manifesto also used language frequently found on 8chan, and 8chan’s predecessor imageboard site, 4chan.<sup>126</sup> This self-described (in the case of Roof) process of engaging with material generated by what were almost certainly like-minded individuals online aligns very well with the points Corman, Archetti, and Holt, et al. make. These individuals very likely ingested and shared extremist ideas with a like-minded collective—or extremist subculture—and radicalized within this subculture.

#### Violence: Mobilization and Implications

While it is beyond the scope of this study, the results also suggest that given each attackers’ apparent engagement and radicalization within extremist subcultures, what would otherwise be considered self-radicalized lone actors may have radicalized within, and acted on behalf of, a collective. This also likely supports the work of Juergensmeyer, as the attackers’ manifestos purvey several tenets of the white supremacy ideology, call for and encourage additional violence from an assumed audience, and provide

<sup>125</sup> Mezzofiore, G., O’Sullivan, D. “El Paso mass shooting is at least the third atrocity linked to 8chan this year.” CNN. Updated August 5, 2019. Accessed July 5, 2020.

<https://www.cnn.com/2019/08/04/business/el-paso-shooting-8chan-biz/index.html>.

<sup>126</sup> O’Malley, N., Barlass, T., Begley, P. “White-bred terrorist: the making of a killer.” Sydney Morning Herald. August 10, 2019. Accessed July 6, 2020. <https://www.smh.com.au/national/white-bred-terrorist-the-making-of-a-killer-20190806-p52ee7.html>

justification for carrying out further attacks having conducted their own. Messaging of this kind likely serves to link their attack to an audience of like-minded individuals, and create an act to rally around, contributing to the audience's cohesivity.

## **Conclusion**

This research study sought to assess the extent to which manifestos authored by high-profile white supremacy extremist attackers may indicate shifts in the white supremacy ideology. It was hypothesized, given the pertinent literature on the subject, that while shifts in the core themes of the white supremacy ideology would not occur, some shifts in secondary or tertiary themes of the ideology would. The results of the study support both aspects of the hypothesis, indicating that manifestos authored by high-profile white supremacy extremist attackers do indicate some shifts in the white supremacy ideology. Comparisons of manifestos authored and disseminated online by white supremacy extremist just prior to their attacks revealed ideological themes shifted between them, either appearing or re-appearing in a later manifesto. This study contributes to the literature in three key ways. The first is by providing support to a relatively small body of literature on the nature of white supremacy extremist manifestos, and their implications for the ideology they purvey. The second is by providing support to the existing literature on the nature of ideologies, extremist communication, radicalization, and mobilization to violence. The shifts in secondary or tertiary ideological themes, in particular, appear to be complex, and both support and contribute to the literature on these subjects.

The third and final way this study contributes to the literature is by serving as a baseline study, providing a foundation for future work. As mentioned previously, this



study is limited in scope, and does not consider the cause of ideological shifts—only to what extent manifestos may indicate them. While some preliminary assessments regarding the potential influence previous attackers’ manifestos may have on subsequent attacker’s adoption of specific themes are included in this work, these remain preliminary assessments. Future work should be done to better understand what causes ideological shifts observed in manifestos, and should encompass additional white supremacy extremist manifestos not considered in this study. This work should include consideration of whether or not such shifts—or the introduction of relatively novel themes in manifestos as observed in the current study—resonate in the online realm following dissemination, and what other factors within the online realm may contribute to these shifts, such as specific socio-political forces. Some social media analytic tools may prove useful in shedding light on this aspect of the problem.

Future work should also consider how white supremacy extremist messaging is introduced into current or potential extremist subcultures outside of manifestos, and what factors are the most influential on the flow of information throughout these subcultures. These efforts would inform our understanding of the extent to which lone actors may actually be acting on their own, or on behalf of a larger collective/audience, and how this complex system of communication behaves and reacts to various phenomena, including socio-political forces. Additional future work may also assess the existence of longer-term shifts in the white supremacist ideology by considering historical ideological material purveyed by various white supremacist organizations.

Finally, the results of this research have real-world implications that should not go without mention. In the context of this study’s findings, as well as the substantive work

of Corman, et al., Archetti, et al., Tretheway, et al., and Holt, et al., shifts in extremist ideologies may serve as ideological bases for radicalization. In the context of extremist subcultures in which like-minded individuals may communicate extremist ideas, relatively novel and/or recurring themes purveyed in high-profile attackers' manifestos, and elsewhere, may be used to brand a subculture, or a particular collective, thus contributing to its cohesivity, the ease of extremist communication, and the potential for radicalization and mobilization to violence. For law enforcement, U.S. Intelligence Community agencies, and the U.S.'s foreign partners working to identify and thwart white supremacy extremists before they carry out attacks, identifying and understanding ideological shifts is therefore crucial.

## Appendix A: Code Counts

Coded Themes	Dylann Roof Brenton Tarrant John Earnest Patrick Crusius			
<b>Race / Society Perspective</b>	46	89	59	22
Anti-African / American	17	1	1	0
Anti-Diversity	0	6	0	1
Anti-Hispanic	1	0	1	9
Anti-Muslim	0	14	2	0
Anti-Semitic	4	2	35	0
Pro-Segregation / Anti-Race Mixing	3	3	2	4
Race - White & Not White	19	26	11	3
<b>Replacement / Invasion / Population / Preservation</b>	6	224	16	40
Anti-Immigration	0	39	2	18
Invaders / Invasion	0	60	0	7
Replacement	0	67	2	8
Genocide	0	4	6	1
Preserve Race	1	12	6	1
Population / Disparity	5	42	0	5
Pro-Deportation	0	9	0	4
<b>Own Land / Traditions / Culture / Heritage / People / Nation</b>	2	112	5	8
Community / "Unity"	0	7	0	2
Ethnicity	0	26	0	1
Identity	1	6	0	1
Land, Tradition, Culture, Heritage, People	1	49	4	4
Nationalism	0	22	1	0
<b>Conspiracy / Denial</b>	4	10	18	7
Historical Denial	2	0	0	0
Jewish Conspiracy	2	1	16	0
Left Takeover	0	0	0	3
Media/State	0	9	2	1
<b>Christianity / Religion</b>	0	12	15	0
<b>Political Spectrum / Society</b>	0	71	8	24
Political	0	15	3	8
2nd Amendment-Gun Rights	0	5	1	1
Anti-Left	0	2	0	9
<b>Ecofascism / Environment</b>	0	37	0	21
Anti-Consumerism / Lifestyle	0	2	0	7
Anti-Industrialization/Urbanization	0	5	0	2
Eco-Fascism	0	9	0	0
Environmentalism / Preserve Nature & Animals	0	21	0	12
<b>Anti-Corporatism / NGO</b>	0	27	0	16
<b>Economy / Market / Jobs / Labour</b>	0	35	2	14
Workers / Labour / Automation	0	19	0	14
<b>Accelerationism</b>	0	41	3	1
Accelerationism	0	30	3	1
<b>Encourage Action / Threat</b>	9	136	39	13
Encourage Action	5	83	18	9
Infamy	0	2	1	0
Threat / Rid / Kill	0	24	6	2
Violence / Revolution Necessary	2	26	14	2

## Appendix B: Code Co-Occurrence Counts

# Brenton Tarrant

[illegible]

Note: Colors represent relative intensity of code co-occurrence counts, starting with no color (zero), followed by Blue, Green, Yellow, and ending with Red to signify the highest counts.

## Appendix B: Code Co-Occurrence Counts (Continued)

**John Earnest**

[illegible]

## Patrick Crusius

## Patrick Crusius

	Accelerationism / Balkanization	Accelerationism	Anti-Corporatism / NGO	Christianity / Religion	Conspiracy / Denial	Historical Denial	Jewish Conspiracy	Left Takeover	Media/State	Ecofascism / Environment	Anti-Consumerism / Lifestyle	Anti-Industrialization/Urbanization	Environmentalism / Preserve Nature & Animals	Economy / Market / Jobs / Labour	Workers / Labour / Automation	Encourage Action / Threat	Infamy	Threat / Rid / Kill	Violence / Revolution Necessary	Own Land / Traditions / Culture / Heritage / People / Nation	Community / "Unity"	Ethnicity	Identity	Land, Tradition, Culture, Heritage, People	Nationalism	2nd Amendment-Gun Rights	Political	Race / Society Perspective	Anti-African / American	Anti-Diversity	Anti-Hispanic	Anti-Muslim	Anti-Semitic	Pro-Deportation	Pro-Segregation / Anti-Race Mixing	Race - White & Not White	Replacement / Invasion / Population / Preservation	Genocide	Invaders / Invasion	Population / Disparity	Preserve Race	Replacement		
Accelerationism / Balkanization	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Accelerationism	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Anti-Corporatism / NGO	0	0	0	0	3	0	2	0	1	2	0	3	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Christianity / Religion	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Conspiracy / Denial	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Historical Denial	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jewish Conspiracy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Left Takeover	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Media/State	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ecofascism / Environment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Anti-Consumerism / Lifestyle	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Anti-Industrialization/Urbanization	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Eco-Fascism	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Environmentalism / Preserve Nature & Animals	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Economy / Market / Jobs / Labour	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Workers / Labour / Automation	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Encourage Action / Threat	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Encourage Action	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Infamy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Threat / Rid / Kill	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Violence / Revolution Necessary	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Own Land / Traditions / Culture / Heritage / People / Nation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Community / "Unity"	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ethnicity	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Identity	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0</																	

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## **Curriculum Vita**

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